



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY MAY 19, 2026

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brad Spencer called the meeting to order on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Spencer led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting

ABSENT: McCoy, Betts

STAFF: Administrative Services Director Simon, Public Safety Director DuRose

VISITORS: Jody Farley (NorthShore Gymnastics)

4. ****CONSENT AGENDA****

Mayor Spencer stated that the consent agenda items would be considered routine and acted on by one motion unless someone would like to remove an item for discussion. The consent agenda

- a. Approval of City Council Minutes from the May 5, Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable; (Batch #1 - Checks No. 24365-24391).
- c. Non-City Assembly Permit Requests:
 - Tour De Tonka – August 1, 2026
 - Polo Classic – August 2, 2026

Motion by Spencer, seconded by Grotting to approve the consent agenda. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy, Betts. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 3-0

5. Reports of Boards and Committees by Council and Staff.

Council member Fisher Attended the following meeting:

- LMCC

Council member Grotting Attended the following meeting:

- None

Mayor Spencer Attended the following meeting:

- Meeting with Mayor Maas- Kusske and Chief DuRose for Annual Chief review
- Mayor Maas-Kusske's grandpa's funeral
- MP Fire Dept (West Suburban) Banquet – retirement for Scott Hartmann
- NW League of Mayors
- Gary Kroells' Mass for his father

Amber Simon Attended the following meeting:

- HC Election Training

6. West Hennepin Public Safety – Director Matthew DuRose: Presentation of the April 2026 Activity Reports.

Director DuRose presented the April 2026 monthly activity report for West Hennepin Public Safety. He highlighted several key points:

The department continues to refine the format of the activity report to more accurately reflect statistics and operational activity, including the carving out of incidental activities in other jurisdictions — such as traffic stops made while assisting a neighboring agency — to ensure those incidents are not counted as Independence or Maple Plain calls.

Call volume continues to rise, up approximately 9% over the same period last year, which itself reflected an increase over 2024. Recent activity has included a notable volume of administrative requests, primarily background checks from other law enforcement agencies. Director DuRose noted this may reflect seasonal hiring trends.

The department is not issuing burn permits at this time, in keeping with the ongoing statewide burn ban. Director DuRose reported that the community has been largely compliant and understands the restrictions.

The department continues to see scam activity targeting residents and has been providing information to city newsletters to help residents and families protect themselves.

Two hiring processes are currently active: one for a part-time police officer position and one for a full-time vacancy. Both candidates are in the background investigation phase, with an estimated start date of approximately August 1st.

Director DuRose also announced the publication of the West Hennepin Public Safety 2025 Annual Report, now live on the department website and promoted via Facebook. He acknowledged Reserve Officer Lisa for her significant effort in redesigning the report format. The Council had no questions.

7. Consider approval of the issuance of a 501(C)(3) Facilities Revenue Note for the North Shore Gymnastics Project, SERIES 2026, and related documents and actions therefor.
 - a. **RESOLUTION No. 26-0519-01** - Approving the Issuance of the Conduit Bonds.

The Mayor provided brief background, noting that the Council had previously discussed this item and that the remaining step had been finalizing contract language. A representative of North Shore Gymnastics, Jody, was present to answer any questions; the Council had none. The Mayor clarified for the record that these conduit bonds represent no debt obligation or financial liability to the City of Independence. The city is serving as the issuing authority because North Shore Gymnastics' home city of Maple Plain does not have the requisite issuing capacity. The City of Independence will receive a modest fee for its role.

Motion by Grotting, seconded by Fisher to approve RESOLUTION 26-0519-01 approving issuance of Conduit Bonds. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy, Betts. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 3-0

8. Discussion on New Options for Cities Relating to In-Person Early Voting Days for the Upcoming Local, State and National Elections.

Amber Simon presented information on recently enacted legislation giving cities the option to reduce in-person early voting from 46 days to 18 days prior to an election. She explained that under the current 46-day window, voter turnout at City Hall is very sparse in the early weeks — sometimes only one to a few voters per week — with the bulk of activity concentrated in the final two weeks. The current setup also creates operational friction, as staff must continually switch between managing early voting and handling routine city hall business at the front desk.

Simon noted that the proposed 18-day model would allow the city to designate a dedicated voting space — similar to the setup used on Election Day — providing a more focused and secure environment for voters. She also highlighted that under the 18-day window, ballots are fed directly into the tabulating machine on-site, rather than being transported to Hennepin County by courier. This was seen as a security improvement, particularly in light of concerns from the prior election cycle regarding courier handling of ballots.

It was clarified that residents wishing to vote before the 18-day window could still do so via mail-in ballot, which follows essentially the same process. Required extended voting hours — including weekend days and evening hours in the final weeks before the election — would

remain unchanged. Director Simon also confirmed that voting services at Vinland would continue as in prior years. The Mayor expressed support for the change, noting that the extended 46-day window raises questions about voters casting ballots before candidates may withdraw.

The Council directed staff to notify the county of the city's preference to adopt the 18-day in-person early voting option, with a response deadline of June 2, 2026.

Motion by Spencer, seconded by Fisher to indicate the city's preference to reduce in-person early voting from 46 days to 18 days. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy, Betts. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 3-0

9. Proclamation Recognizing and Thanking – First Presbyterian Church of Maple Plain's Good Works Philanthropy Group for the volunteer services performed in the City of Independence in Association with the Community Clean-Up Day.

The Mayor read aloud a proclamation recognizing the First Presbyterian Church of Maple Plain's Good Works Philanthropy Group for their volunteer contributions at the City of Independence Community Clean-Up Day held on May 2, 2026. The group assisted with unloading vehicles and provided food for participants. The Mayor noted this was the second consecutive year the group has supported the event and commended their dedication. A copy of the proclamation is to be sent to the organization.

10. Open/Misc.

The Mayor reported on several notable legislative and funding developments:

The state bonding bill included \$4,000,000 for Highway 12 improvement efforts in the city — the largest single-district earmark the Mayor could identify in the bill. The original request had been \$16,000,000 for implementation and \$4,000,000 for design work. While the appropriation reflects only partial funding, the Mayor expressed gratitude to Senator Lehman and Representative Robbins for their advocacy, noting the outcome exceeded initial expectations. The city is awaiting final bill language to understand timing and conditions for accessing the funds, and expressed hope that the appropriation can be leveraged for meaningful forward progress rather than absorbed back into MnDOT's general budget.

Senator Amy Klobuchar has included \$1,000,000 in federal special project earmarks for paving improvements at the Vinland Center. The appropriation has advanced to final approval stages, which the Mayor described as a positive milestone, noting that many such projects do not reach this point.

The city also secured a two-year extension — to 2029 — on \$450,000 in previously allocated railroad crossing improvement funding for the crossing on Townline Road just west of Loretto. The original funds were set to expire at the end of 2027, a timeline the Mayor indicated was not achievable given the scope of work and funding gap.

11. Adjourn.

Motion by Fisher, seconded by Grotting to adjourn the meeting at 6:53PM. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy, Betts. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 3-0